

## SOLEC KEY MESSAGES

1. The surface waters of the Great Lakes are still among the best sources of drinking water in the world. (Currently serve about 29 million?? people out of 33 million), according to a study that looked at 22 monitoring stations.
2. Invasive, non-native aquatic species are the greatest biological threat to Great Lakes aquatic ecosystems.
3. Body burden levels of some Persistent Toxic Substances are 2 to 4 times higher in the Great Lakes then the general U.S. population
4. Fish advisories are in place on all the Great Lakes even though toxic contamination is still decreasing. Analysis for SOLEC shows that for many species in the Lakes, contaminants levels will need to continue to decline for some years yet before advisories can be lifted, or modified.
5. While, toxic contamination in Great Lakes fish is decreasing, but stresses to fish populations continue. Stressors include: weakening of the forage base, food chain disruptions, habitat loss, and competition with or replacement by non-native species.
6. Sea lamprey controls since the 1960s, have allowed the rehabilitation of the Great Lakes fishery. Recent evidence presented at SOLEC 2000 shows that populations of sea lamprey appear to be on the increase in most areas. This could be due to stream habitat rehabilitation (removal of old dams; clean up of contaminated sediments). The controls cannot be suspended, and may need to be intensified, or the fisheries will be adversely affected.
7. Urban sprawl is the greatest physical threat to high quality natural areas, rare species, farmland, and open space in the Great Lakes basin.
8. The Great Lakes coastline still retains significant, important, and diverse natural areas.
9. Northern Lakes Michigan and Huron, Georgian Bay, and the St. Mary's River are extraordinarily biologically diverse and deserve special protection.
10. Stewardship of Great Lakes natural resources is widespread throughout the basin and includes urban ecological restoration, rural conservation of open space, and Tribal preservation of species of cultural significance.
11. Assessments for the 5 Lakes and Interconnecting Channels show generally that conditions are MIXED, with some areas good, some poor. Obviously a generalization such as this needs to be tempered with specifics of geographic area, environmental compartment.